FROM: P. O. Box 9007
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

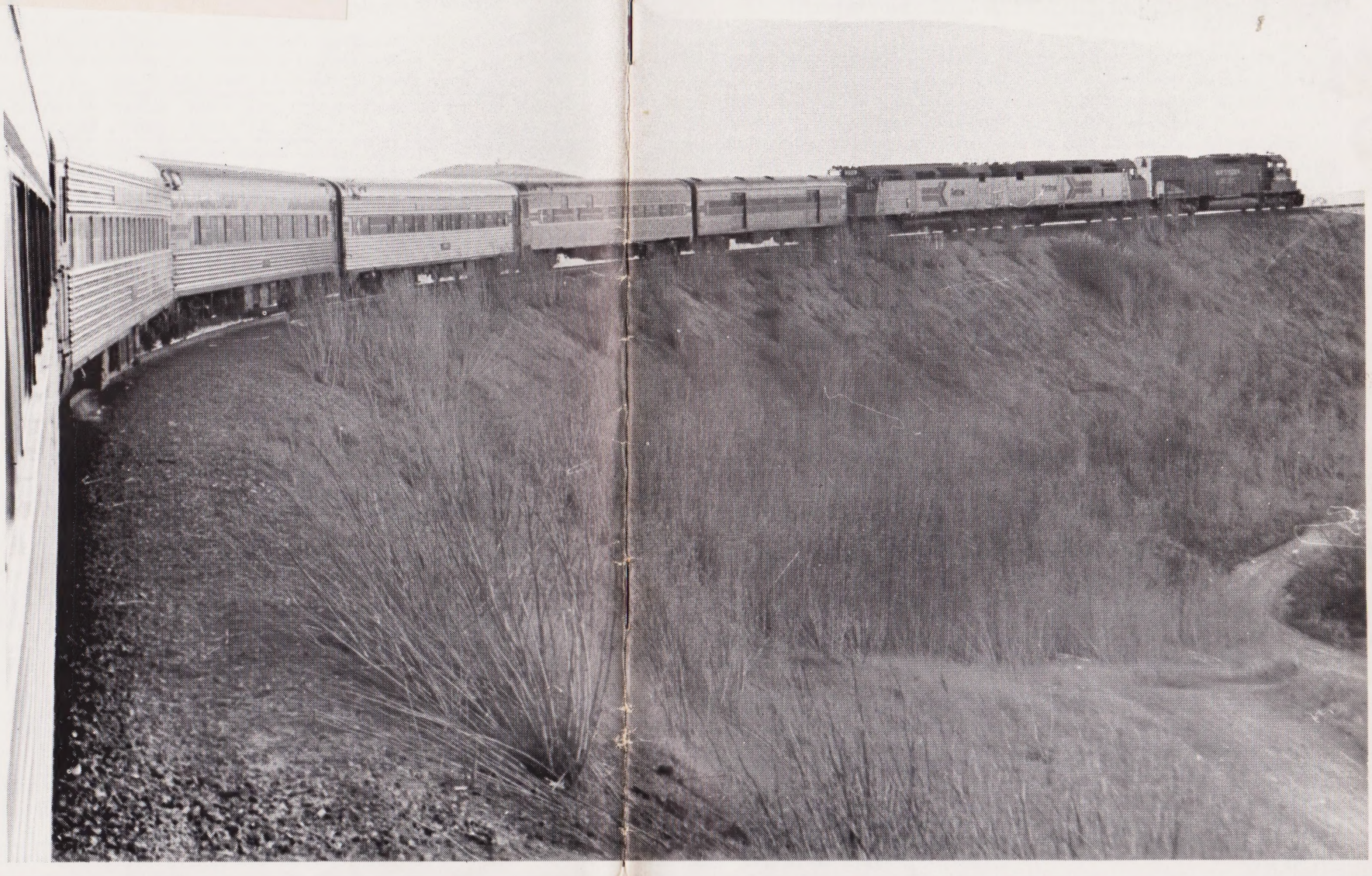
AIR MAIL

To:

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

35¢

VOL.5 NO. 2
SECOND ISSUE OF
JANUARY 1975
#100



January 19, 1975: the northbound COAST STARLIGHT, with helper engine attached, climbs the spectacular horseshoe curve on the Questa Grade north of San Luis Obispo, California

FROM: P. O. Box 9007
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

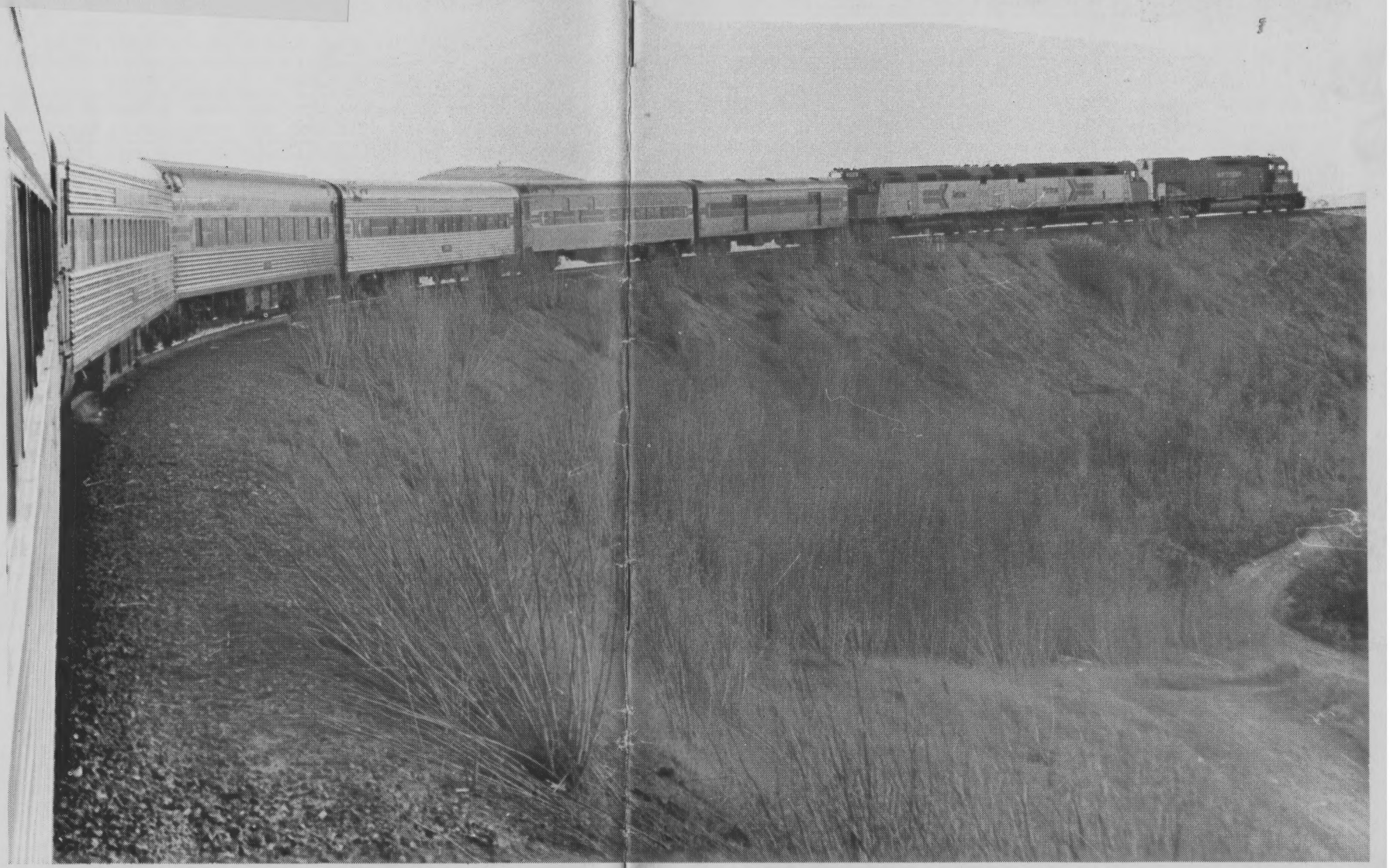
AIR MAIL

To:

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

35¢

VOL.5 NO. 2
SECOND ISSUE OF
JANUARY 1975
#100



January 19, 1975: the northbound COAST STARLIGHT, with helper engine attached, climbs the spectacular horseshoe curve on the Questa Grade north of San Luis Obispo, California

NARP OPPOSES SOUTHERN RAILWAY'S CURTAILMENT OF TRAIN SERVICE

The National Association of Railroad Passengers on Jan. 16 filed a protest with the Interstate Commerce Commission against Southern's proposed cutback of service on its SOUTHERN CRESCENT (see report last issue). SR proposed to cut back the train to tri-weekly instead of daily on the Atlanta-Birmingham segment of its Washington-New Orleans route effective January 31.

NARP President Orren Beaty told the ICC: "At a time when American railroad passenger traffic is increasing, with ridership growing every year since Amtrak began operations, permitting a reduction in service between Atlanta and Birmingham would be a step backward."

NARP noted that Amtrak plans to increase service between New Orleans and Los Angeles (on which thru sleepers of the SOUTHERN CRESCENT operate) to daily as part of its current 5-year plan. Said NARP: "Atlanta, a major metropOlitan area and a center of the new industrial South, has insufficient railroad passenger service already. Altho it is not a matter before the Commission, we believe there should be additional service between the Great Lakes states--preferably thru Cincinnati and Chattanooga to Atlanta and thru Macon to link up at Jessup, Georgia with the eastern Amtrak trains serving points between Florida and New England. Railroad tracks serving this route are owned and used by Southern Railway. There should be daily service between New York and Washington thru Atlanta to New Orleans. In fact, Amtrak proposes to increase its present service between New Orleans and Los Angeles to daily ... connecting with the SOUTHERN CRESCENT at New Orleans to provide the East Coast - West Coast connection so badly needed on the southern route."

NARP did not protest the other reductions proposed by SR.

Express Ads

PSGR. CAR SLIDES wanted by R.S. Brundage, 2440 E. 51 St, Apt C2, Tulsa OK 74105.

FOR SALE: Lightweight 14-4 Pullman from the Southern Belle. Also matching Mail-Baggage-Dorm. car. Phone 816-753-0623.

ROTARIANS ATTENTION! If you have an interest in ANY form of railroading, you are invited to join the International Railroad Fellowship of Rotarians. Also, get details of "On To Montreal By Rail" re the R. I. Convention in June. Write to Edward P. Fitch, Pres., P.O. Box 323, Nashua, N.H. 03060.

PAY NO ATTENTION to all the talk in the media about saving energy! Let's have our fun now, for tomorrow we die! Join WHEE! (What the Hell for Energy Efficiency!) Lobby for bigger car engines. Down with trains. Offices everywhere.

RTN'S EXPRESS ADS cost just 50¢ per line for line of 80 characters and spaces. Display ads are $25 per page (5x8 inches), with smaller sizes priced proportionally. Write: MESSAGE MEDIA - RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

SUBSCRIBE TO RAIL TRAVEL NEWS. Just $8.00 per year for 24 twice-monthly issues by first class mail. Overseas rates on request. Write: MESSAGE MEDIA - RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

MORE EXPRESS ADS are to be found on page 23.

Rail Travel News (formerly Rail Travel Newsletter), Vol. 5, No. 2 (Whole No. 100), Second Issue of January, 1975. Copyright © 1975 by Message Media. Published twice monthly by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $8 per year; single copy 35¢. STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Malibu; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston. Mailing date this issue: Jan. 30.

ON THE COVER:

The COAST STARLIGHT northbound on Jan. 19 ascends the spectacular Questa Grade, rounding the horseshoe curve just north of San Luis Obispo, California. SP engine 9232 (an SD45T2) is assisting Amtrak units 571 and 558, the former of which had failed. See George Hyko's article in this issue. Photo by George Hyko.

THE 100th ISSUE OF RTN

Welcome to our one-hundredth issue. For this little centennial celebration we bring you a big 24-page issue with the following special features: (1) our fifth annual chronology of rail travel events of the past year; (2) Peter Putnam Bretz's next installment of his visit to Amtrak headquarters, in which he investigates the Operations department; (3) George Hyko's tale of adventures on Amtrak's COAST STARLIGHT in January.

NATIONWIDE RAIL STRIKE IS AVERTED

The railroad industry reached agreement on terms of a new contract with the Sheet Metal Workers union on Jan. 22, thus avoiding a strike threatened for Jan. 24. An agreement was also reached with the United Transportation Union, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes and the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen.

MOVEMENT IN CONGRESS FOR GASOLINE RATIONING

Congress this month was working on a plan to ration gasoline--probably about nine gallons weekly per driver--, but President Ford in a Jan. 21 news conference said he would veto a gas rationing bill if it was a "superficial answer" to the energy problem. Ford's own proposal for taxation of petroleum products is expected to raise gasoline prices by at least 10¢ per gallon. A nationwide opinion poll released this month indicated that a majority of Americans prefer rationing to other alternatives.

MAGNETIC LEVITATION TRAIN RESEARCH IS CANCELLED

The Washington Star-News reported in mid-January that the Dept. of Transportation on Jan. 3 quietly cancelled research contracts with Ford Motor Co. and the Rohr Corporation for development of 300mph mag-lev vehicles. The Federal RR Administration had been administering a project to develop such trains within the next decade, and these two contracts were the only ones being pursued. In West Germany, a mag-lev development project by Krauss-Maffei for Ontario's GO-Urban system was recently discontinued when the West German government withdrew support. In that case, several industrial firms have filed suits to collect payments not yet made by K-M.

AMTRAK REQUESTS MORE FUNDS FOR FISCAL 1975

Amtrak, in a Dec. 5 letter to the DOT, revealed this month by the Washington Star-News, asked for $66 million more to carry it thru next June 30. The demand was caused largely by inflationary pressures, and also by a slight decline in revenues due to the recession and to the easing of last year's energy crisis psychology. Amtrak plans to ask for $450 million for fiscal 1976, which actually runs thru Sept. 30, 1976, a 15-month period, since the government is altering its fiscal year dates next year.

NEWS BRIEFS: DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION has not given up on "people movers." This month it awarded 3 preliminary-design contracts of $500,000 each to Boeing-Vertol, Otis Elevator and Rohr Industries..... THE PENN CENTRAL will have to close down at the end of February, spokesmen said this month, unless Congress approves $250 million more in federal financial assistance to the bankrupt railroad..... THE ERIE LACKAWANNA wants to be included in Conrail's Northeast rail reorganization and indicated this month it will need $10 million, mostly by the end of February, to keep it going thru the fiscal year..... THE RAIL INDUSTRY and rail travel are looking up these days, as reflected in reports and comments in Railway Age (Jan. 13). Increased freight traffic in 1974 and Amtrak's reversal of the decline in rail travel were given as two promising trends.....

LATE NEWS BULLETIN!!

As we go to press, the Amtrak Board of Directors has just met to elect Paul Reistrup (Jan. 29) president and chief executive officer of Amtrak. Other matters the board was considering were the awarding of a contract for the first of its new bi-level cars, the ordering of another 200 single-level cars, and the continuing issue of Dallas-Houston service.

A SEVERE WINTER - HOW THE TRAINS FARED

Amtrak, remembering the horror stories of last year's big winter storms, was prepared when the record blizzard conditions in the Midwest hit the weekend of Jan. 11. The Great Plains states were hit hard by frigid arctic winds, and most of the middle section of the nation was disrupted by violent storms. Minneapolis had the worst blizzard in 35 years.

The policy adopted by Amtrak under these conditions was to hold trains in stations if bad conditions existed ahead, rather than risk the possibility of their being stranded in the storm. On Jan. 11 the following conditions existed: Train 7 of 1/10 (i.e., which left Chicago 1/10) was held at Grand Forks and delayed 9 hours; No. 8 of 1/9 was held at Willmar, Minnesota, delayed 10 hours; No. 8 of 1/10 was held at Havre, Montana; No. 9 of 1/11 was held at Minneapolis; No. 7 of 1/11 was held at Minneapolis; No. 10 of 1/10 was held at Livingston, Montana (this set of equipment had been detoured thru Pasco, WA following a freight derailment at Gold Bar, WA on the ex-GN Wenatchee line, in which 31 cars and 2 of the 3 engines had left the tracks).

On Jan. 12 the following conditions prevailed: No. 8 of 1/9 arrived Minneapolis 31½ hours late (had been 29 hrs late at Willmar). No. 10 of 1/10 arrived Minneapolis on 1/13, almost one day late, and operated to Chicago as advance No. 8, making stops of both No. 8 and No. 10. No. 8 of 1/11 arrived Minneapolis 6:30am 1/13 and then continued to Chicago, stopping only to detrain passengers. No. 7 of 1/11 left Minneapolis 16 hours late. No. 9 of 1/11 left Minneapolis 22 hours late, and was delayed when the first engine derailed west of town. The consist was pulled back to Minneapolis and new units were added before No. 9 set out once again. No. 7 of 1/10 was 14 hours late at Billings, MT and was being held for clearing weather conditions. Amtrak reported that all the above delayed trains were warm, with ample supplies of food and water.

Train 5 of 1/10 was 3hrs 30min late and holding after a freight derailment near Hengler, Utah. No. 5 of 1/11 was nearly 5hrs late and holding at McCook, Nebraska, with frozen equipment. No. 8 of 1/10 had terminated at Havre, MT 14 hrs late, and passengers were transferred to the No. 8 of 1/11. The equipment then turned at Havre to operate as No. 7 westbound on time 1/12.

On Jan. 13 the following was noted: No. 7 from Havre 1/12 reached Seattle 11pm, 11 hrs late (this set of equipment had originated at Havre, when turned there 14 hrs late. No. 8 from Seattle 1/12 ran a few minutes late to Spokane, but with only two coaches, and an ex-NP Travellers Rest car on the rear in coach service emergency use only. No. 10 left Seattle on time with makeup equipment--Amtrak 1208, 2154 dorm, 9542, 4547, 9331 lounge, 8350 ("Rest" car, only diner), 2615 sleeper. No. 9 due into Seattle 8am 1/13 was set to arrive about 26 hours late on 1/14. The evening of Jan. 13-14, two No. 7 sets were due into Spokane, the first about 9:30pm running almost a day late, and the second reasonably on time.

Seattle to Portland rail service was disrupted on Jan. 12 when the southbound COAST STARLIGHT derailed near Castle Rock, WA. Initial reports indicated no serious passenger injuries as 8 cars left the tracks. The northbound STARLIGHT was held at Kelso-Longview, and passengers from the derailed train were brought there by bus. The northbound equipment was then loaded and hauled back to Portland, to become #11 for Los Angeles. Northbound passengers were taken from #14 by bus. Passengers aboard #14 included Amtrak executives en route to Seattle for conferences. Both 5:30pm departures of the MOUNT RAINIER were annulled, and passengers were bused.

Inside Amtrak Headquarters

PART TWO

BY PETER PUTNAM BRETZ

My mission to Amtrak began on November 15 and ended on December 16, but most of the time was consumed in riding trains. I was able to spend a mere seven working days inside the Headquarters Building interviewing various people and checking on information. Because this time was spread over three weeks, toward the end it seemed as if I belonged to the place; I was just getting a feel of the operations and of who did what and who was close to whom. And who was <u>really</u> running the show and who <u>appeared</u> to be running the show. I was beginning to come and go at will, rather than be escorted around. Some people thought of me as a regular employee now and one of the "crew." Others wished I would get out of their hair and go. I imagine a few gentlemen breathed a sigh of relief when I finally got lost.

In seven days I certainly did come up with a gut feeling about things. First of all, it seemed that there are some very dedicated and positive thinking people in charge of certain departments at Amtrak. And there are some the opposite. I met some "politicians" whose main function seemed to be to maintain the correct image without really doing much beyond that. It seemed that looking good on paper to the government and its various agencies was a large preoccupation of some Amtrak heads, while letting underlings run the show. These assistants are sometimes very good and/or very self-willed.

One of the best things Amtrak has is its computerized reservations system--when it works. Amtrak's biggest liability is its dealings with the employees who work outside of 955 L'Enfant Plaza North. A decided lack of communication is Amtrak's continual undoing. From the point of view of corporate headquarters, trains run smoothly and employees are happy and contented and problems (those small ones that do exist) are almost completely eliminated. NRPC is doing this, cleaning up that, purchasing this and renovating that over there and is proceeding to make Amtrak the best-run "railroad" the nation has ever seen. That is what they say.

I come away elated. Then, at Washington Union Terminal that afternoon, as I make my daily commute to Baltimore and check the various consists, talk to crews and see and observe the many real problems repeated day after day--headquarters talk begins to be ivory tower thinking.

One of the most interesting aspects of Amtrak's operations was Train Operations. Where do all the cars go and why? How does Amtrak decide which equipment to place here or there? In fact, how are car assignments for different trains decided? These and many other questions were on my mind as I proceeded to the fifth floor and spoke with various people, high and low. I shall attempt to paraphrase what I learned there.

First of all, in deciding car assignments, Marketing makes requests to Operations and/or Car Service and they work up a car assignment sheet figuring the different types they want and then, if such equipment is available, it's a simple matter of supplying the cars. If equipment is not available, Marketing is told they just can't have it or they asked for too many cars. A specific example of this would be the ex-Santa Fe hi-level coaches. Amtrak owns 62. Yet for the coming summer, Marketing wants 58 in service of trains 1-2, 3-4, and 15-16. Car Service says: "You cannot have that many under any circumstances" because of having to backshop so many cars continually. There is a program of having a car go into the shop every two years for a light overhaul and every four years for a "heavy." So 58 cars, leaving only 4 as backup would not nearly be enough.

How about substituting standard coaches on those trains in place of the hi-levels? That can be done, but it means keeping in mind the assignments of all cars to cover trains all over. If there are enough low-level cars to cover, fine. It's hard to answer how many cars Amtrak has available on a given day. Instead of the proposed 58 hi-levels, how many are currently assigned to those three trains? A check of the

consist sheets revealed nine regularly assigned in the SUNSET LIMITED's consist; 12 go on the LONE STAR and 30 for the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, effective October off-season. Total: 51, not leaving much leeway. Doing it a different way, Amtrak required as of mid-November 1132 cars to fill normal, regular train consists. Available then were 1310 cars. That's about 200 cars extra. But they're not necessarily surplus, I was told, as the then-current Greyhound strike was in progress and other things come up. Lots of "school movements" occurred just before Thanksgiving, so the amount needed fluctuates--1132 was "yesterday's" report.

How does Washington keep track of the performance and condition of a given train at a given time? I was told about the operations desk, complete with a big wall map showing Amtrak routes and locations of trains on those routes. Several times daily Amtrak gets reports of the whereabouts of all those trains. Maybe not each and every train, but the great majority. Any train that develops trouble in any way, shape or form, on any railroad, is supposed to notify that operations desk. The report then is logged in a log up there. The bureau operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

So, I queried, I could step over there and say "What's the condition of train #1?" But I was told, no, I can't. There's no way to tie in to what a train is doing while it's moving, unless it creates a problem. The information concerning an in-train failure en route is put on a form 1000 which is in the car. In other words, Amtrak, via the operations desk, can tell if train so-and-so jumped the track or is delayed or re-routed, but if the air conditioning goes ga-zonk or the train runs out of water and heat, headquarters is oblivious, so long as the train is still rolling.

The form 1000 is a standard trouble sheet kept in each car. The conductor or porter, etc., lists anything wrong on the form and then, at the end of the run, it's looked at by mechanical people. Then what? Then they try to fix it or else the car is cut out until it can be fixed. Now, I was informed, not all small problems are fixed when they are reported at the end of a run because a car can operate not 100% up to par. Things that wouldn't directly create passenger discomfort may be left unrepaired because of not having the equipment available to sub a car and repair the problem.

Question: Is there a specific line drawn as to what would constitute a reason for holding a car out? Answer: No. It's decided basically by the mechanical department in the yard where the car is located at the time. Tying this point in with consists, the lists of such are kept by the Car Distributor right here at Headquarters. Working from set consist sheets made up here, they develop a given day's consist based upon availability of equipment. Any change would be known by the operations desk. A certain yard would call up and ask, "We have a bad-order car; what'll we use?" Car Distributors here then tell the people what car to put on the train. Amtrak has Car Distributors that cover Chicago and the West; Florida and the Corridor; and the East-West trains (#30-40-50-52). Those guys know what they have in their assigned yards and know what's on the trains. They program what is to be on there tomorrow. When a bad-order develops, they are notified, and they inform the yard what to put on the train. If the yard must do something different, it tells the Car Distributor. Then they both discuss what has to be done.

Bear in mind that these mechanical departments and yards are run by the railroads, not by Amtrak--at the present time. There are Amtrak supervisory help there. The yard people are not under Amtrak's jurisdiction, and the supervisors are there as "emissaries between Amtrak and the railroads." They check out these problems with the car foreman and try to work out ways to get the car back in service. Or if the problem is too big, the car is cut out and some other way is worked out.

I commented on "horror stories" of last year, like no air conditioning in the dining car and reports turned in, and the car going out unrepaired in the next day's consist, etc. In answer I was told that this is very unlikely. Operations has standing orders that no train leaves a yard with any failure. A car can move ten feet and get failed, but basically when they leave the yard they're supposed to be operable.

So then Amtrak can't keep track of performance and conditions of a given train on a given day? As far as performance, yes they can, but as far as equipment, no. Amtrak obtains daily performance sheets from the railroads. Each train for the past 24 hours is listed with any causes of delay. Some equipment problems might be listed at the same time. Malfunctions of cars and locomotives are supposed to show on the sheet. But it's really after the fact--there's not much that can be done on the road with most cars, anyway. There's no mechanical department in every little station. Why does a broken car have to go all the way to a terminal; why doesn't Amtrak have caches of material stockpiled at strategic points?

Well, one of the main reasons why not is that--on a given route--breakdowns really don't occur that frequently. About once or twice a month. In addition, what parts would be stockpiled? And would a man know what part it was when he got it? Amtrak has a multitude of car types. There are perhaps 100 types of wheels used in the system because of all the original railroad differences. The repair attempts that are done en route are done by railroad men--most freight men who don't have passenger knowledge. Perhaps the largest reason is that even if the other factors could be eliminated, Amtrak can't afford the large inventory of parts. A train is really on its own after it leaves the terminal.

Amtrak and the various railroads are working on contracts that will make the carriers more responsible for a train out on the road--not leaving a disabled train stranded, such as the Mopac is fond of doing. The contracts grant financial benefits to railroads not to have failures of cars. This is to be done on a percentage basis; at the end of the month they get credit or demerits with respect to car operability, cleanliness, and everything else. Amtrak would not go so far as to say that the railroads are currently falling down on the job. Actually, the biggest problem with Amtrak is its equipment, and the biggest problem with the equipment is its obsolescence. Cars enter the shops for repairs and parts aren't available--they have to be manufactured. And sometimes Amtrak must go and solicit to have someone make the parts for them.

I asked how Amtrak decides what cars to send to the refurbisher and which cars to replace? I was told that at the present time about one-third of Amtrak's equipment has never been to the shop once. So those cars are scheduled first; but when a car breaks down, it goes right into the shop for repairs. Eventually, when every car has been shopped at least once, a designated program will provide certain cars with shopping intervals on a regular basis. Every 2 years for a light overhaul and every 4 years for a "heavy." This is similar to previous railroad practice.

Now the reason Amtrak doesn't immediately shop those cars that haven't yet been shopped and/or refurbished is that the shops are full. Cars are sitting in shops now just waiting for parts. The shops are loaded. (The shops, incidentally, are the same thing as the refurbisher--like Mira Loma and Beech Grove.) Amtrak doesn't really decide which cars to shop; because of breakdowns, they decide for themselves.

In the last few months Amtrak didn't send any cars to the back shop unless they had broken down. An unrefurbished car that can roll will roll until Amtrak finds room in the shop. Amtrak has 10 or 11 shops working for them now, but they can't get the cars out fast enough. A lot of the problem is those obsolete parts.

I questioned an Amtrak spokesman about the reports of cars actually coming out of the shop with broken mechanical parts. "They don't come out broken mechanically. No car is accepted unless it's operating 100% when it comes out." I was told that since October, 1973, every car that goes into the shop gets a heavy overhaul. No more of this partial stuff. Why, at Hialeah, Amtrak used to send cars in for mere cosmetic jobs, purposely. But no more. Now, the shops that can presently do a "heavy" are: Beech Grove, Woodcrest, Topeka, Mira Loma. The Como shop in St. Paul is presently getting set up to do heavy overhauls. The same for Rocky Mount, NC. Eventually, every shop will be able to do them. The quality of work varies with the shop, some doing better-looking jobs than others.

Here's an interesting point: When Amtrak first went in, everything was going to be by number; forget the names entirely, take the names off everything. After all,

you can't distribute 2000 cars by name. When cars went in for refurbishing, lots of names were removed. I can recall certain Santa Fe cars that had, on each vestibule door, metal plates with raised letters spelling "Blue Mott" or whatever. The shops would just machine the name off, leaving a blank plate. How gross! However, the idea now is to retain the names. Not only that, but when redone cars go back to the shop for whatever reason, the names are being put back on. The reason is simple: certain people at Amtrak thought it would be nice to retain the names. (Really, lots of decisions are made at Amtrak because certain key people think an idea would be "nice.") Names were kept for "historical reference." (One wonders about the Rock Island sleepers: "Broadmoor" changed to "Times Square," etc.)

If a car gets into an accident, what replaces it? Answer: That's simply a matter of whether the yards carrying the assigned equipment for the train (e.g., Los Angeles for the SUNSET) have similar extra equipment around. If not, Amtrak looks to other yards and moves stuff in, if available. Amtrak has so many bad-order cars that it can't get all the cars to the places they are assigned to. Hence, trains go out with different equipment, or missing cars, "blanked" sleepers, etc. ("Blanked" is Amtrak's term for a missing car in a consist. It's just blanked out in terms of selling space. Some railroads have a good percentage of cars on the line that are supposed to be there, and some railroads don't. If an 11-bedroom sleeper goes bad-order, for example, a 10-6 can replace it. What about people who may have paid for a double bedroom and received two roomettes? Amtrak considers that a fair trade, with no recompense necessary. However, things such as a single person paying for a bedroom being put in a roomette--yes, there is a program to reimburse the extra cost he shelled out. To turn it around, if a person paid for a roomette and an 11-bedroom sleeper was substituted, Amtrak would put him in the bedroom with no problem. A step up is just an extra bonus in that case. Would Amtrak ever put a sleeping car passenger in a coach? No. In those cases, the offer is to fly people to their destination or rebate their fare to coach if they want it. In cases where the passenger would rather wait 24 hours for the next train than fly or bus to his destination, Amtrak will put him up--paying for his hotel bill and reasonable food charges. That is rare, however. Most people just wish convenience and Amtrak does all it can to provide it.

Returning to equipment problems: when the SOUTHWEST LIMITED derailed in Kansas some months back, all the basic equipment for replacement was on the Santa Fe at Los Angeles and Chicago without having to raid yards anywhere else. Sometimes cars are borrowed from the Burlington to fill out the Santa Fe side. Every railroad has a certain amount of built-in protection for bad-order and back-shopping that Amtrak feels is sufficient. A casual observer, standing at trackside, might notice that the consist of train X would regularly include a 10-6 sleeper. Then for awhile a 16-4 would be substituted, then a "Pass" series sleeper from the Great Northern--this sort of thing. There again, it's the bad-order or backshop situation. A car gets out of the line and it takes forever to get back in; sometimes Amtrak never gets the chance to relieve it.

Occasionally, also, Marketing wants a different type of car assigned to a run. Generally 16-4 cars are put on overnight runs rather than 2-day affairs. Amtrak prints a consist and car assignment list that shows what number cars are assigned to what railroad and what number series cars operate in specific trains. For example: Normal train consists show for Nos. 50-51: a 9400-series dome coach (Chicago-Newport News), 5200-series coach, 8110-series diner-lounge-dorm, 2010-series sleeper, and 1000-series baggage-mail from Chcago-Washington. In actual fact, the day I rode it (Nov. 19) it had a 5668 subbing for the 9400 dome coach, 5657 instead of a 5200 coach, 8110 (proper series diner), "Gull" 16-4 #2012, baggage 1307 instead of a 1000-series. Not too bad and not too atypical, either.

The consist list is used primarily for the railroads' convenience. In addition, say at Chicago on the Penn Central, things are listed so the PC can determine exactly what cars they're responsible for--that operate strictly on the PC, and those that

operate on other railroads. In Chicago there is a pool arrangement with certain diners, sleepers and lounges. Other types are assigned specifically. A specifically assigned car would not wander; a P-70 would not go west. There are strict instructions to that effect. The main reason is its walkover seats. People would not tolerate them on a long distance train. It would be better to blank a car than replace it with a P-70. Some of them do have reclining seats, but since it's too much trouble to sort them out from other P-70's, Amtrak says: No farther than Chicago with all of them.

How does Amtrak decide the assignment and suitability of cars to routes, and keep track of them? As it turns out, this is mainly done thru bitter, hard experience. Originally it was mostly matching up car voltages and capacities for a given route. Some cars in a consist would have Waukesha air conditioning, others steam-ejector. Then there developed problems of clearances for the cars. The suitability of cars to location is compiled in a master book which is given to the Car Distributors.

Take the example of trains 21-22. I was told that Amtrak had lots of problems there with air conditioning. Amtrak put all 64 volt cars there, but came to learn that they have a spray condenser for the air conditioning. Because of extreme heat, the water would evaporate in the spray before it could cool the car. So they put in ex-SP cars with a full-flooded condenser to alleviate the problem. Now nothing but full-flooded condenser equipped a/c is put on the train.

Amtrak learns there things by trial and error. But would Amtrak know enough not to assign, say, a BN car down south in the summer? Yes, of course, was the answer. In the example used, the 64 volt cars were SCL cars that worked fine on Florida runs. Why not in Texas? Who knows? Maybe a certain thing shouldn't work but does, and vice-versa. Of course Amtrak is careful not to assign cars that won't clear certain areas.

And then I was told about clearances: one of the reasons Amtrak doesn't run domes on the New York-Florida trains is the obvious danger of running domes under catenary. They'd have to switch them out at Washington, making everyone leave before Alexandria so there's no occupancy of domes under wire, the way the B&O used to do. On the CAPITOL LIMITED they made everyone leave the dome before Washington. But it would cost money to switch the domes out at Washington, so the train does not get them, for economy's sake. Delay is a bigger factor, tho. Of course, Amtrak does switch the 81-82 with the mail car that comes down from Boston, and also there was a Montreal sleeper on the MIAMIAN during the holidays. But with the SILVER METEOR and the CHAMPION, Amtrak doesn't switch it from New York until it reaches Florida.

How does Amtrak coordinate information between itself and the member railroads? This is done primarily by telephone. Headquarters staff personnel talk directly with railroad people in the yards about train makeups and such. Does Amtrak ever have any problems with the railroads refusing to cooperate? "Oh, there are problems," I was told, "but nothing is ever so great that it doesn't get worked out." With respect to the railroads telling the complete truth on reports to Amtrak, Train Operations said it has had very few problems that are serious.

How does Amtrak evaluate complaints that come in? How do they follow up on them? Answer: they are handled by Ray Engleston. He follows up and answers every complaint. He checks the consists and notes the formal reports of any failure, or whatever the complaint is. So then, I asked, if the passenger picks up a complaint form and lists the light out in his bedroom, this is actually followed up? Yes--tho the car may have traveled many round trips before anyone listed the problem on the form. A passenger should never assume that a malfunction such a a burned-out light bulb or anything else has already been reported. He should notify the porter or conductor and have him list it on the form 1000. These are actually followed up. However, a defect may not be repaired right away--why shop the car and blank the line for a burned-out bulb? This is assuming that such small defects can't be repaired during turnaround time--which is usually the case, unfortunately. Cracked windows and such depend upon turnaround time. Now, a car will never go out with an inside pane cracked, but with an outside pane (of double glass) yes, if factors dictate. It's the decision of the Mechanical Department. (continued on page 19)

Rail Canada

MLW-WORTHINGTON'S NEW LRC passenger-train coach will enter service in February on a test basisbetween Toronto and Sarnia, Ontario, the Globe & Mail reported Dec. 31. Both the LRC coach and its special locomotive will become a part of regular CN Tempo train service on the Sarnia run. A spokesman said that the experiment will help test LRC concepts for a 3-6 month period. The equipment will make one round trip per day. The Canadian Dept. of Industry, Trade & Commerce has contributed $2.5 million toward construction of the prototype unit. CN participation in the LRC program was announced shortly after the LRC coach returned from the U.S. FRA's test track at Pueblo, Colorado. The new runs will be in preparation for certification of the LRC for 120mph operation on straight track, and also to establish various criteria for high speed runs with LRC-type equipment.

EX-CTC PRESIDENT J.W. "Honest Jack" Pickersgill has aroused a field of opposition concerning his remarks that nobody would miss Canada's passenger trains should they disappear. Ernest L. Disormeau, of Cochrane, Ont., wrote in the Toronto Star that with 5000 Canadians dead each year due to auto crashes and another 200,000 injured, Canada needs the trains. He suggested that among the supporters of rail passenger trains "it would not take a year to miss Pickersgill if he were to remain silent."

THE CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION of Canada has suggested a 120-day delay in approval of new passenger train fare increases. At a mid-January hearing, the CAC asked improvements be made in the train system. CN is seeking a 10% fare hike; CP Rail, 15%. York University economist Ronald House said rail fares have increased faster in the last ten years than either bus or air fares. Brian Kelly, official in the federal energy department, said that if present passenger train policy continues, the service will gradually die. Kelly said that fuel costs will grow enormous in the 1980's, but this fact is still disregarded as development and expansion continues in "energy wasteful" auto and aircraft ventures. He called rail service more efficient in energy terms.

CANADA'S NEW LRC got a boost from Transport Minister Jean Marchand, who told an Ottawa press briefing that LRC could make the new STOL (Short TakeOff and Landing) service obsolete. Marchand said the LRC could make the Ottawa-Montreal run in 90 minutes, with no major roadbed improvements required. CN's fastest passenger train now takes 1'59".

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT in Ottawa reported in mid-January that it would soon be issuing a statement concerning the future direction that passenger train development would take in Canada.

SERVICE RESUMED ON the British Columbia Railway the second week in January, following a 2-month strike. News photos of passengers boarding the first RDC cars at North Vancouver station were prominent in the Vancouver metropolitan dailies.

INFORMED SOURCES INDICATE that the Province of Alberta will soon issue a report calling for development of a high speed train system linking Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta's two largest cities. The most expensive plan would call for investing $200 million in roadbed alone for a Japanese-style "bullet" train, which would make the run in 90mins, over a shortened, 150-mile route. The LRC option would require $35 million in equipment and roadbed, but would take 130 minutes, thought to be too slow. The LRC coach recently operated over the route, but was limited to 75mph.

A CTC INVESTIGATION of a freight derailment at Ingersoll, Ont., in May, 1974 in which a CN Tempo passenger train was struck and damaged, showed that the wreck may have been caused by track shifting under the freight. Some 60 passengers were hurt, and a switch engine standing at the scene was knocked on its side. The Tempo train was westbound at 80mph before braking in an attempt to avoid the derailed freight cars. There was only minor damage to the Tempo train, which jacknifed slightly. All cars remained coupled, and only one truck separated. Only 5 coach windows were broken, but more glass was knocked out later during rescue operations, as cars leaned at 30-45° angles. Track work had been carried out in the crash area earlier in the day.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

ANNUAL CHRONOLOGY OF RAIL EVENTS

1974

JANUARY

1 CBS-TV first-hand report on the FLORIDIAN, delayed by freight derailment
SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR left Chicago to be delayed 32 hours by freight derailments, and detoured on Rio Grande's Royal Gorge Route
Eastbound NATIONAL LIMITED ran out of fuel and stranded passengers in Jefferson City, MO in below-zero weather
St. Louis-Chicago Turboliner ran out of fuel and reached Chicago five hours late
Northbound COAST STARLIGHT delayed 21½ hours in Klamath Falls by freight derail't
2 Railroad Reorganization Act signed, to bail out PC and six other railroads
Grand Trunk and SEMTA added 4th commuter train Detroit-Pontiac, MI
3 New Jacksonville, FL Amtrak station opened
4 Southbound COAST STARLIGHT hit truck and derailed at Newark, CA
Jervis Langdon Jr. replaced William H. Moore as president of PC
5 SUPER CHIEF blocked by UP freight derailment near Barstow, CA; passengers bused and flown on
6 Amtrak gave names to 5 Empire Service trains in new timetable
9 Supreme Court ruled that passengers can't sue Amtrak for discontinuing trains
U.S. court in Denver ruled that Amtrak must obey state liquor laws
14 Fraser Canyon in British Columbia closed two days by snow
15 EMPIRE BUILDER trapped near Troy, MT by washouts
16 Oakland-Portland segment of COAST STARLIGHT annulled due to track washout; service resumed Jan. 25
18 PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL resumed runs after several days' annullment due to washouts
23 Burning tires on Montreal subway train forced evacuation of 600 passengers
24 Ohio PUC ordered EL to continue its Cleveland-Youngstown commuter service
27 Amtrak service Portland-Seattle disrupted 2 days by freight derailment
30 Pres. Nixon announced plan to allow $2.5 billion for transit next fiscal year, including some for operating expenses

FEBRUARY

1 Canadian Transport Commission ordered CN to establish Toronto-Barrie commuter train
9 Pres. Nixon mentioned Amtrak for first time in radio address on energy and transportation, said 1973 ridership was up 14%
11 Southbound STATE HOUSE derailed near Mitchell, IL
State Assembly called for restoration of passenger service on NWP RR in California
12 Eastbound SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR derailed at Stratton, NE
13 Inaugural run of Amtrak's BLACK HAWK, Chicago-Dubuque
14 Amtrak issued its 2nd annual report; revenue psgr miles rose 25.2% above 1972
15 Amtrak's nationwide reservations system began operation
22 BLACK HAWK damaged by automobile crash
26 SUNSET LIMITED delayed 6 hrs by freight derail't and detoured Colton-Phoenix
27 NARP called for replacement of Amtrak president Roger Lewis
Two psgrs killed, 24 injured in Amtrak bus at Del Mar, CA while being bused from late-running COAST STARLIGHT to San Diego
28 Amtrak board approved purchase of Turboliners from Rohr and 200 new coaches

MARCH

5 Inaugural run of Amtrak's SAN JOAQUIN, Oakland-Bakersfield, CA
6 Northbound COAST STARLIGHT hit car and derailed at Shedd, OR
7 Amtrak drew up new incentive plan contract with PC
Santa Fe president John S. Reed told Amtrak to discontinue use of "Chief" names
8 NBC-TV film aboard SHAWNEE Mar. 3 criticized crowded train, some riders in baggage car

11 Westbound SUNSET LIMITED derailed at Dayton, TX
13 Inaugural run of expanded INTER-AMERICAN, extended Ft. Worth-St. Louis
Ground broken for National Visitors Center at Washington DC Union Station
14 STATE HOUSE derailed at Bloomington, IL
18 Fourth commuter train added Washington DC-Brunswick, MD
Chicago voters approve formation of Regional Transportation Authority
19 Amtrak announced 5% fare increase effective April 16
20 Auto-Train announced May 24 startup date of Louisville-Florida operation
28 Amtrak dropped plans to re-route TEXAS CHIEF thru Dallas, TX

APRIL

1 Amtrak removed food service cars from Hiawatha Service trains
CN's Toronto-Barrie commuter train began operation
10 Amtrak systemwide timetable, first since October 28, 1973
11 Canadian Transport Comm. okayed discontinuance on June 1 of Edmonton-Dawson Creek overnight train
23 White House nominated 6 people to reconstituted Amtrak board of directors, including Roger Lewis and 3 consumer representatives required by law
30 Westbound FLORIDIAN derailed at Winamac, IN

MAY

1 Amtrak's 3rd anniversary: dedication of Brighton Park Maintenance Facility, Chicago
Report that Amtrak would cut employment back 5%
(approx. date) Fortune Magazine highly critical of Amtrak management
7 Bicyclists beat CNW's Chicago-Lake Geneva commuter trains in race
10 Eastbound FLORIDIAN derailed 29 miles south of Indianapolis
CTA rearend train collision in Chicago; 225 minor injuries
13 National Transportation Week opened with running of DOT "State of the Art" subway cars in New York
14 DOT Secretary Brinegar openly criticized concept of long distance passenger trains
17 Northbound SOUTHERN CRESCENT derailed near Fleming, AL
18 Amtrak RDC train 413 derailed at Hartford, CT
19 Amtrak summer systemwide timetables appear: SUPER CHIEF and TEXAS CHIEF renamed SOUTHWEST LIMITED and LONE STAR; first runs of EXPO 74 train; coach reservations required on all long distance trains; MONTREALER/WASHINGTONIAN renamed MONTREALER and schedule shortened; GEORGE WASHINGTON/JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY renamed JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY and re-routed on C&L Chicago-Cincinnati; Northeast Corridor service increased; NATIONAL LIMITED re-scheduled; NORTH COAST HIAWATHA began daily operation; food service restored on 2 Hiawatha Service trains; hot food eliminated on SAN JOAQUIN; planned 2nd train on BROADWAY LIMITED route didn't materialize
20 Long Island Rail Road added 47 weekday trains
Jersey Central extended commuter service to Phillipsburg, NJ
24 Inaugural run of Louisville, KY-Sanford, FL Auto-Train
BART general manager, under pressure, announced coming resignation
25 Operation of NIGHT OWL extended to Saturdays
26 40th anniversary of PIONEER ZEPHYR commemorated by RPO operation for one day on SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR Denver-Chicago
28 Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau's campaign train began 4-day tour
PC's New Haven line disrupted by electrical breakdown
29 RTN called for replacement of DOT Sec'ly Brinegar and Amtrak Pres. Lewis
30 CN Tempo train derailed near Ingersoll, Ontario

JUNE

1 On-board entertainment inaugurated on SOUTHWEST LIMITED, EMPIRE BUILDER, and COAST STARLIGHT
3 DOT approved Amtrak $347 million equipment purchases
Demolition of Chicago's Central Station began
4 Amtrak released Roger Lewis's reply to Fortune Magazine
6 Amtrak announced order of 200 Metrocoaches and 4 Turboliners
7 COAST STARLIGHT annulled in Oregon due to freight derailment; #11 detoured June 8 on BN
8 20% fare increase effective on many Amtrak routes
14 Westbound EMPIRE BUILDER delayed by burning snowshed near Glacier, detoured thru Great Falls, MT
15 Passengers on SUNSET LIMITED rebelled at riding in non-air-conditioned cars
17 Southbound FLORIDIAN derailed near Indianapolis
Passenger fell to death from eastbound BROADWAY LIMITED near Mansfield, OH
20 Prime Minister Trudeau announced plan for Canadian Passenger Transportation Corp.
21 Summer Royal Hudson steam train tours began on British Columbia Railway
30-day re-routing of NORTH COAST HIAWATHA on Milwaukee Road Miles City-Three Forks, MT began while BN rebuilt Yellowstone River bridge
24 Amtrak ordered 25 new diesels from General Electric, at $12.2 million
27 SUNSET LIMITED had minor derailment of engines at San Antonio, TX
30 DOT announced Chicago-Boston via Cleveland as first yearly experimental route required by law; also announced Norfolk-Cincinnati route already approved by Congress
Amtrak discontinued use of Rail Travel Credit cards

JULY

1 All-night snack service instituted on long distance Amtrak trains
Amtrak diners now use five major credit cards and accept checks
4 JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, 9 hours late, annulled at Charlottesville due to PC detour and engine failures
5 Eastbound NATIONAL LIMITED derailed in southwestern Pennsylvania
Eastbound SOUTHWEST LIMITED derailed near Melvern, KS; 1 psgr later died in hospital
8 Two EL commuter trains collided at Belleville, NJ: 29 hurt
9 Eastbound NATIONAL LIMITED had air conditioning fail in half its cars; happened again on July 14
12 $2.1 billion Illinois state transportation plan approved by legislature, includes funds to subsidize passenger trains
15 St. Louis Union Station sold to private investment group
Auto-Train revised schedules on both its routes
(approx. date) United Aircraft said it would drop TurboTrain manufacture
16 Amtrak announced startup of LAS VEGAS CELEBRITY TRAIN on Sept. 20
17 Northbound CHAMPION had 7 overheated cars; passengers abandoned it at Savannah, GA
18 DOT awarded $2.1 million to Ford Motors to design magnetic-levitation train
19 PC's New Haven line disrupted by fallen power line
21 Two riders on BROADWAY LIMITED suffered food poisoning
22 DOT annual report on Amtrak released; RTN called it "tremendously disappointing"
23 Roger Lewis re-elected chairman and president of Amtrak by board of directors, and idea adopted of searching for a chief operating officer; Paul H. Reistrup of ICG mentioned in press as possibility
25 (approx date) DOT approved purchase from Rohr of 7 more Turboliners for N.E. Corridor
29 Confidential study of DOT revealed; criticized lack of coordination
31 Houston trains (SUNSET LIMITED & LONE STAR) consolidated into one (SP) station

AUGUST

1 DOT ordered PC to shut down Chicago-Louisville line; FLORIDIAN re-routed Chicago-Nashville on C&EI, JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY re-routed on C&O Chicago-Cincinnati
2 Vandals placed ties on track, damaging BLACK HAWK's 2 RDC units
Geo. R. Wallace, PC VP-Marketing, killed in fall from passenger train in Philadelphia
5 New York-Montreal ADIRONDACK made inaugural run
6 CN began TurboTrain service Montreal- Ottawa
Ten riders on EMPIRE BUILDER had food poisoning
8 Southbound CHAMPION had minor engine derailment in Tampa, FL
12 Canadian LRC train began Montreal-Ottawa demonstration runs
SILVER STAR derailed near Wake Forest
14 SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR derailed at Ogden, UT
26 Freight derailment at San Ardo, CA caused COAST STARLIGHTS to detour thru San Joaquin Valley

31 Bomb scare caused evacuation of westbound SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR at Galesburg, IL
Amtrak executive VP J. Richard Tomlinson resigned "in disgust"

SEPTEMBER

8 Amtrak long distance fares in West reduced 9%
9 Amtrak announced 5-year plan of equipment purchases and track improvement
13 Inaugural run of Chicago-Pt. Huron BLUE WATER
14 Inaugural run of BART transbay service
Last trip of Amtrak's EXPO 74
All-time rail speed record of over 250mph set at DOT's Pueblo, CO test grounds
DOT Sec'y Brinegar called for invention of a "lovable bus"
15 Fall timetables published by Amtrak (except systemwide); thru sleeper back on NATIONAL LIMITED & SOUTHWEST LIMITED after mid-summer discontinuance; NORTH COAST HIAWATHA returned to tri-weekly; joint Amtrak-Greyhound ticketing instituted; free pillows and blankets on long distance coaches; hot food back on SAN JOAQUIN and 4 state-subsidized Illinois trains; reserved dinner seatings being phased in on long distance trains
16 BLACK HAWK hit freight near Galena, IL
20 Inaugural run of LAS VEGAS CELEBRITY TRAIN
21 Southbound COAST STARLIGHT derailed near Red Bluff, CA
23 Southern Pacific asked for 111% commuter fare increase
24 FLORIDIAN returned to PC route via Indianapolis
26 Canadian government shelved plan for a "Canadian Amtrak" corporation
28 CP Rail discontinued Princess Marguerite steamer, cutting a month off schedule
CN's westbound SUPER CONTINENTAL in head-on collision with freight, Blue River, B.C.
29 RTN published figures showing fallacy of concentrating on corridor rather than long distance trains for economic reasons

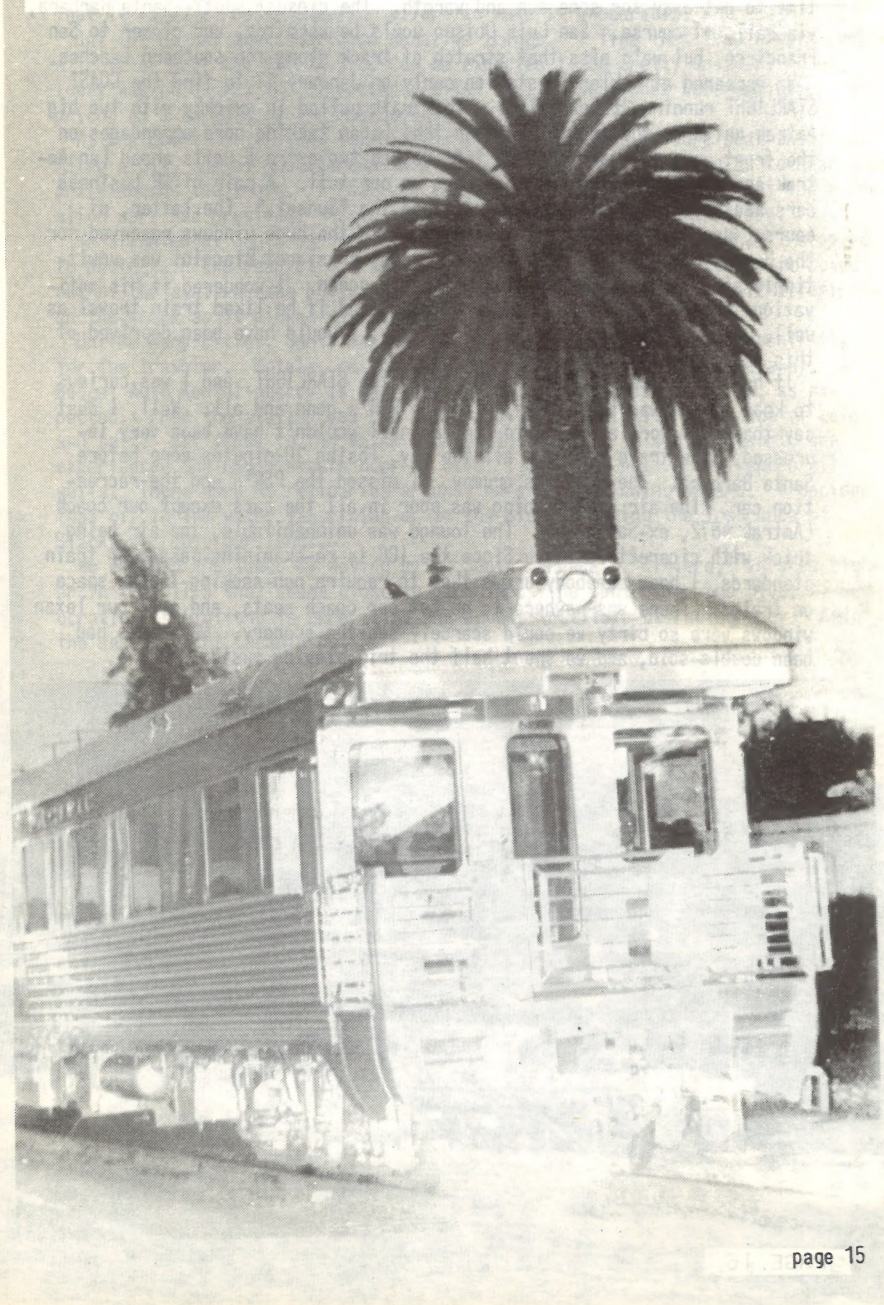
OCTOBER

1 LRC train moved to Pueblo, CO for testing by DOT
2 Southern Railway agreed to handle reservations thru Amtrak's system
3 Amtrak deferred its auto-ferry plans for Indianapolis-Florida after failure of auto carrier tests
7 Empty CN commuter train in head-on collision with freight in Pierrefonds, Quebec
BART decided to sue its equipment suppliers
9 Canadian government announced a new plan for passenger service, withholding details; CN & CP talk of eliminating existing transcontinental service
Auto-Train announced plans for service from U.S. border to point near Mexico City
10 Baltimore broke ground for new subway
12 Northbound FLORIDIAN derailed at Thomasville, GA
Streetcars returned to Yakima, WA
13 Long Island Rail Road added 6 Sunday trains on Port Washington Branch
15 (approx. date) Amtrak ended its passenger service representative and on-board service director program
18 First seasonal run of RENO FUN TRAIN
Southbound Turboliner #301 hit truck at Pontiac, IL
23 Turboliner tested on Chicago-Detroit route
25 Amtrak announced 10% fare increase on most routes for Nov. 15
27 Amtrak fall timetables published (except systemwide); Empire Service and Northeast Corridor service improved; New York-Albany WASHINGTON IRVING began state-supported runs
28 CN added second daily Turbo run Montreal-Toronto
29 President Ford signed Amtrak $200 million appropriation for current fiscal year
DOT announced experimental route for current fiscal year: Washington DC-Denver
Auto-Train said it will start a truck-train service on its two routes in the U.S.
30 Inaugural run of extended EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS, New York-Detroit
31 PANAMA LIMITED detoured Memphis-Milan, TN on L&N & IC to Fulton due to frt derail't

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)

Sailing Down the Coast of Santa Barbaree

by George Hyko



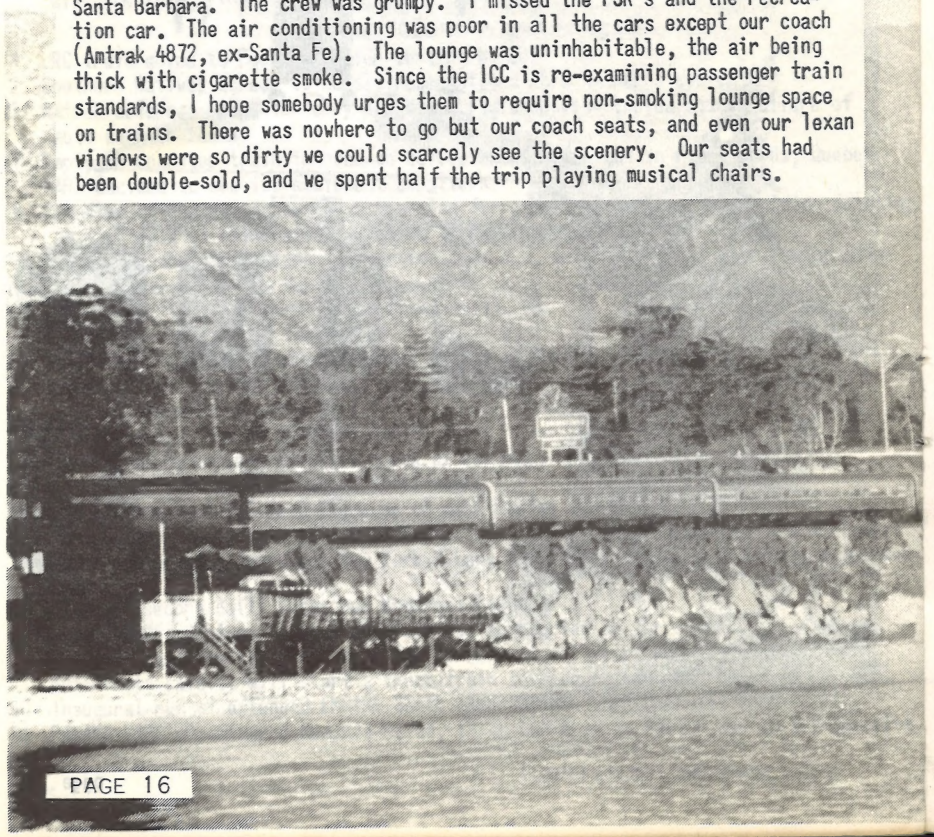
OR, TRYING TO FIND SOME SUN ON THE STARLIGHT

(PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR)

After two wet winters, the rains had failed us. Instead, a stagnant mass of unwholesome fog and polluted air hung over the ground for days. We were tired from weeks of hard work at a project now finished, and decided it was time to get away for some sun and warmth. The closest spot?--Santa Barbara, via rail, of course. San Luis Obispo would be warm too, and closer to San Francisco, but we'd miss that stretch of track along the southern beaches.

We appeared at Oakland's station early on January 17 to find the COAST STARLIGHT running 1¼ hours late. The train pulled in quickly with two big Amtrak units on the front, and then they began tacking more appendages on the front and rear, and when we left we had two extra F units ahead (an Amtrak and an SP) and two surprise cars on our tail. A pair of SP business cars had been added--the "Del Monte" and the "Sunset." The latter, of course, was that magnificent, shiny car with the huge windows reserved for the head of the mighty Octopus. Yes, today president Biaggini was unwittingly accompanying us down along Amtrak's ocean. I wondered if his motivation for traveling was the same as mine, and if he liked train travel as well. I recalled that, had he had his way, I would have been deprived of this rail adventure today.

It had been some time since I'd ridden the STARLIGHT, and I was curious to know how it was these days, with the PSR's gone and all. Well, I must say that if I were a novice to the trains I wouldn't have been very impressed. The train ran late all the way, losing 10 minutes more before Santa Barbara. The crew was grumpy. I missed the PSR's and the recreation car. The air conditioning was poor in all the cars except our coach (Amtrak 4872, ex-Santa Fe). The lounge was uninhabitable, the air being thick with cigarette smoke. Since the ICC is re-examining passenger train standards, I hope somebody urges them to require non-smoking lounge space on trains. There was nowhere to go but our coach seats, and even our lexan windows were so dirty we could scarcely see the scenery. Our seats had been double-sold, and we spent half the trip playing musical chairs.



One young woman valiantly marshalling three little kids timidly asked a porter if he had any Amtrak buttons or something for her charges. "No, ma'am," he replied wistfully, "the girls on here used to have them all the time, but they took them off, so we don't have any anymore." No airline could get away with the stuff Amtrak does. The only reason it can survive with such idiocy, I mused, is that train travel is inherently so superior to all other forms of transport that it takes a really superior effort to make it unbearable.

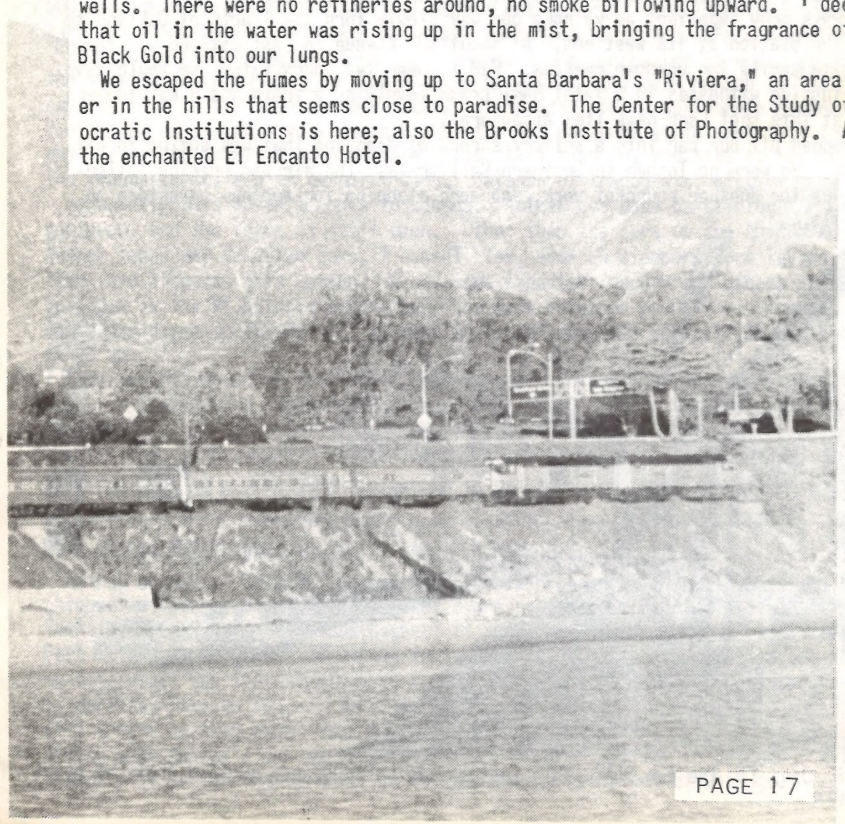
But let us not dwell on these negative things. I find that food always perks a traveler up. And Amtrak food can be expected to be pretty uniformly good. Today was no exception. The hand-crafted "deli" sandwiches were delicious, and priced as a bargain in any restaurant.

At one point 15 soldiers boarded our coach, resulting in more seat shifting. After a bit, one of them turned on a portable radio, and I was glad to hear some music aboard the train. I realized then that I missed the music that the recreation cars had provided. Music and rail travel are highly compatible.

We alighted at Santa Barbara as the sun dipped below the horizon. I stopped to photograph the rear of our train, with the car "Sunset" on it, as it moved out of the station (see photo on page 15). A floodlight at its tail illuminated the track as it picked up speed.

Unlike many cities, Santa Barbara has a train station located conveniently for the traveler. Motels, restaurants and the beach are two blocks away. A Budget Auto Rental agency is next door. The air was clear and mild, as expected. From the station you can smell the ocean, with its fragrance of kelp and salt. But close to the water much of the time, I am sad to report, one experienced the unmistakable odor of oil. I eyed the hulking off-shore oil wells. There were no refineries around, no smoke billowing upward. I decided that oil in the water was rising up in the mist, bringing the fragrance of Black Gold into our lungs.

We escaped the fumes by moving up to Santa Barbara's "Riviera," an area higher in the hills that seems close to paradise. The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions is here; also the Brooks Institute of Photography. And the enchanted El Encanto Hotel.



Jan. 18: The southbound STARLIGHT moves thru Santa Barbara, just above the ocean beach. Highway 101 is just behind the train. Two Amtrak units & seven cars visible.

Here was what we came for--the nicest things about Southern California. It was a shirt-sleeve 80 degrees. Spring daffodils, summer petunias, autumn berries and winter poinsettias vied with each other in the seasonless Now of the Southland. The motionless air was heady with the scents of acacia and pittosporum.

Only the anticipation of another train ride could move me to leave. We were down at the station on a bright and warm Sunday as the big machine pulled in from Los Angeles promptly at 12:15. The train was well-patronized, as it had been on Friday. Today there were two Amtrak units (571 & 558), baggage car 1159, sleeper 2400 "Snohomish River" used as a dorm car, coaches 4492, 4857, 4520, 4826, and 4816, lounge 3501, diner 8039, and sleeper 2720 "Pine Gorge." This was a similar consist to Friday's, when there was one additional sleeper.

The trip north was quite a bit more upbeat than our earlier ride. The crew was livelier and sunnier (maybe the presence of that Great Northern sleeper as their crew car helped). We ran on time all the way, only losing 4 minutes the last hour as we slowed to enter San Jose and Oakland. The windows were freshly cleaned, and this time they were of glass, at least in our coach (4816, ex-Santa Fe).

At San Luis Obispo an extra engine was attached (see cover photo) to power us over the Santa Lucia range. I learned later that engine 571 had failed (as it had on our southward trip), and thus it was Southern Pacific power to the rescue. The diesel unit was removed at the town of Santa Margarita, on the other side of the grade.

The only complaint I must register about this ride was that again the lounge was hideously smoky. The air conditioning didn't seem to work, and again in nearly all the cars but ours (I must lead a charmed life) the air conditioning could be felt to be going steadily downhill as we made our way north.

I always grow impatient as we poke our way slowly thru the length of Oakland to reach the station at its west end. At about 10th Avenue in East Oakland we stopped for quite awhile for unknown reasons. Had it been two hours later, we would have been ringside witnesses to a fatal BART crash involving a train and a maintenance truck at this spot (see news item elsewhere).

We hopped off our car into a shivery shroud of damp fog that was oozing in off the bay. We were no longer in Southern California. The air was bracing, stimulating us for another round of work, and more planning for another adventure on the rails.

page 18 Jan. 17: the two STARLIGHTS meet in San Luis Obispo; northbd train at right

To return to refurbishing, the program is slow because with Amtrak's 1/3 out of service ratio, the shortage is too great to take a car out to be refurbished unless it breaks down. A certain number of cars are programmed to the shop between September and May, yet they are not coming out of the shop fast enough. The blame, Amtrak said, does not lie with the shops so much as with the equipment itself. When Amtrak purchased its cars in 1971, some hadn't been in the railroads' own shops for 5-10 years before that. Some cars running now haven't been to a back shop in 8-13 years. The railroads, before Amtrak, were cutting back on passenger service, and would keep the best cars in service and put the others out to pasture or sell them or just leave them sitting in the yards and would do only essential work on those cars that had to roll. This would be the minimum type of repairs.

This type of non-maintenance was particularly true on the Penn Central. Yet even on railroads such as the Union Pacific, they stopped shopping sleepers after the Pullman Co. quit. They would just use those that still operated or needed minimum repairs. But the UP kept that equipment in pretty good shape. A lot of it went to Auto-Train, and Amtrak missed the boat. The original idea when Amtrak was first set up by the DOT was that there were going to be set consists on the trains that wouldn't be changed even for summer peak travel. That was the first idea, and cars were bought accordingly. And when the concept changed, they didn't program enough cars into it. It was a shame to let all those Mopac cars go to Mexico and, yes, the 35 BN coaches go to the Jersey Central. But you see, no one realized (I was told), no one at DOT or Amtrak anyway, thought that the public would come back to the trains like they did. Everybody was astounded. The number of passengers has grown--mushroomed. By this time Amtrak has tried to pick up all the cars it could find--about 500 more than originally. Many that were first rejected were later acquired. Some cars are still available today, but their condition is so bad it's not worth it.

What is to prevent Amtrak from going overseas and purchasing European coaches off the shelf without waiting for new ones to be built? The main reason is that the DOT says we have to buy American-built cars. It's just like a California government official who requested a Volkswagen Dasher for his personal state car, this for economy's sake and to set a good example. The state said no, you have to buy American. The French Turbos are to be built here. Balance of trade, etc, etc.

Apparently this doesn't apply to Canada. Amtrak has been bargaining for Canadian equipment and the issue is still open. Other than the cars on the ADIRONDACK, does Amtrak lease any Canadian cars, I asked? Yes, some CN sleepers were leased for a time, and likewise this season. Also, some Canadian coaches and diners were to be included in the NY-Detroit train, but they were returned by Dec. 9. And the Canadian diner-domes on #68-69 will go back to the CP when the D&H get its own diners fixed up.

Time ran out on us at that point, and my visit to the Operations Department was over. I thanked the individuals I had spoken with. I rode the elevator back to the eighth floor. Jim Bryant offered to take me to lunch. "I want you to try the snapper soup at Hogate's." It turned out to be a new taste treat for me.

LOOK FOR MORE ON PETE'S VISIT TO AMTRAK IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

MORE FRENCH TURBOLINERS TO ARRIVE EARLY IN FEBRUARY

Amtrak announced in late January that 4 more French-built Turboliners are being shipped to this country, and the first 2 are scheduled to arrive via the Atlantic Container Lines ship "Atlantic Cognac" at the ACL docks at 2170 N. Fleet Street, Port Elizabeth, NJ, with unloading to take place Feb. 4 or 5, provided the ship is on schedule. The first train will leave for Chicago, where it will later be placed in service, late on Feb. 7, arriving Chicago late on the 9th. The second set of 2 will arrive by ship about Feb. 27. These trains come without interiors, and will be fitted with Amtrak's own seats at its Brighton Park facility in Chicago. All four trains will be running by April on an unannounced route out of Chicago.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)

NOVEMBER

1 John W. Ingram, head of FRA, took over as head of Rock Island Lines
Electrical failure on SHAWNEE, bus substituted
5 Election Day: transportation issues passed in New York and Louisville; defeated in Los Angeles, Michigan and New Jersey; pro-transit governors elected in several states
(approx. date) ICC approved merger of Rock Island and Union Pacific
6 Wildcat strike on CN in Montreal
9 Northbound Turboliner #302 broke down near Alton, IL and was towed
11 Auto-Train announced successful test of new 3-level auto carriers
PANAMA LIMITED leaving Chicago, and 5 ICG commuter trains, halted by bomb scare
Amtrak said Chicago Union Station will get $1.5 million improvements by April
14 President Ford said mandatory fuel cutback in U.S. is necessary
15 New systemwide Amtrak timetable published
BROADWAY LIMITED detoured Ft. Wayne-South Bend-Gary on NYC due to freight derail't
(approx. date) Rock Island agreed to run trains until June 30, 1975 pending search for full subsidies
16 Northbound FLORIDIAN detoured Dupont, GA-Drifton, FL on ACL & SAL due to frt derail
18 One-week Greyhound strike began
20 Amtrak president Roger Lewis announced his resignation when replacement is found
22 ABC-TV special "Johnny Cash Ridin' the Rails" aired nationwide
Amtrak tested RDC cars Chicago-Milwaukee
Week-long strike on British Columbia Railway began
23 NORTH COAST HIAWATHA began daily seasonal operation 11/23-12/1 and 12/15-1/6/75
26 Eastbound EMPIRE BUILDER derailed at St. Paul, MN
President Ford signed historic $11.8 billion mass transit aid bill
27 COAST STARLIGHT began 10 days of detour via Feather River Canyon when bridge knocked out by freight near Dunsmuir, CA
28 Thanksgiving weekend began: Amtrak ridership augmented by severe weather conditions in East and Midwest
30 Amtrak ran special trains to Army-Navy game

DECEMBER

2 Buses replaced trains for 5 days New London-New Haven, CT while Old Saybrook bridge repaired; some trains re-routed via Springfield, MA
4 Ringling Bros. circus train fire at Kingstree, SC killed four
9 Southern Railway fares increased 10%
10 (approx. date) Illinois governor vetoed funds for Chicago-Quinton, IA train
13 Winter season MIAMIAN runs began
14 Restoration of ex-SP steam loco to power American Freedom Train began, Portland, OR
15 (approx. date) Passage of Surface Transportation Act delayed until 1975, delaying Amtrak executive salary increase
(approx. date) Auto-Train fares increased on Florida route
(approx. date) CP Rail asked for 15% fare boost effective Jan. 15
16 Supreme Court ruled Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 constitutional
17 Southern Railway revealed plans to cut back service effective Jan. 31
18 DOT Sec'y Claude Brinegar announced his resignation effective Feb. 1
19 President Ford dedicated the American Freedom Train at Alexandria, VA
20 CN passenger train and freight in head-on collision at Kingston, Ontario
28 Eastbound BROADWAY LIMITED derailed at Thompsontown, PA
31 Anthony Haswell terminated his position as head of NARP

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AS A FOLLOW-UP to President Ford's nationwide address on energy, he laid down, by presidential proclamation, a $1 per barrel import duty on oil effective Feb. 1, with another dollar to be added on March 1 and on April 1. Congress disagrees with this approach, and some members believe the proclamation was improper. Congress is working on another plan which may include gasoline rationing. As we go to press, Ford is telling Congress he is willing to compromise on terms for saving fuel..... SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE approved a bill offering $275 million in aid to bankrupt Northeastern railroads to prevent their closing down. The bill should go to the full senate shortly, where it is expected to be approved..... A SURPRISE STRIKE of four unions shut down operations on the BN, C&O and L&N railroads on Jan. 27. Work resumed quickly after the railroads sought court restraining orders.....

* * *

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION Claude S. Brinegar, whose resignation takes effect Feb. 1, will return on Feb. 3 to his former post as senior vice president of Union Oil Co. of California, and will also be on its board of directors..... A FINANCIAL TIMES survey in Canada has found 70% of business leaders opposed to formation of a "Canadian Amtrak"..... THE MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE, Amtrak's new Detroit-Jackson train, had its first run on Jan. 20. The train is numbered 373 westbound, 374 east. It leaves Jackson at 6:15am, Chelsea 6:40, Ann Arbor 7am, Ypsilanti 7:10, reaching Detroit 7:50am. It leaves Detroit 5:25pm, Ypsilanti 5:55, Ann Arbor 6:10, Chelsea 6:30, reaching Jackson at 7pm. The 74-mile run is over Amtrak Chicago-Detroit line. Michigan helps finance the train under section 403b of the Amtrak Act. The state is also financing the refurbishing of 3 coaches for the train, 2 of them high-density..... THE NEW NORFOLK to Cincinnati train is scheduled to get rolling March 25, reports Amtrak. Stops will be Norfolk, Suffolk, Petersburg, Nottaway County Station (at Crewe, VA), Farmville, Lynchburg, Bedford, Roanoke, Christiansburg, and Narrows-Pearisburg, VA; Bluefield, Welch and Williamson, WV; and a new station between Kenova, WV and Ashland, KY; and Cincinnati, OH. The train will link up with the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY at Ashland, KY for thru travel to Chicago..... AMTRAK WILL DISCONTINUE the NATIONAL LIMITED's stop at Wilkinsburg, PA next spring unless ridership increases, the corporation announced. This is a flagstop, and Amtrak requires at least 180 riders per month, while the train has been averaging only 34 at that stop..... AMTRAK NOW ACCEPTS Eurocard and Charge Account Service (the Citizens and Southern Bank of Georgia) credit cards for tickets and dining car services, in addition to the five already used.....

* * *

1975 WILL BE Amtrak's best year, the corporation said this month. It will be a year marked by delivery of the first new Amtrak-designed passenger equipment. Only when new equipment is put on the rails, Amtrak pointed out, will the corporation be able really to assess public demand for train travel. Thus far demand has been limited by the limited resources the system had available..... AMTRAK'S NEW ELECTRIC locomotives are about to appear. These are to replace the GG-1's. One is finished and sitting at Wilmington, and a second is at the General Electric plant in Philadelphia. Amtrak has not yet accepted delivery of the new units..... WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH the Minneapolis-Duluth service? Amtrak says there is yet no final agreement on whether the service will actually run..... POSSIBLE SCHEDULES FOR a new route thru southern Idaho have been announced in letters from Sen. Frank Church to interested constituents. The new train would run on the ex-UP CITY OF PORTLAND line. If a thru routing to Chicago is selected, the train will leave Seattle in the morning, replacing the PUGET SOUND 8:30am departure. East of Omaha, it will be routed via Rock Island thru Des Moines. If a Portland-Ogden route is chosen, using the southern portion of the BUTTE SPECIAL route from Pocatello, it will leave Portland about 8am, and connecting with the SFZ at Ogden. This option would not offer any additional Iowa service..... A TRAGIC CRASH on BART occurred in East Oakland late on Jan. 19. One line maintenance worker in a truck equipped with rail wheels was apparently on the wrong track when a train containing only the operator struck it at high speed. The worker was killed, and the operator and two other workers narrowly escaped. The BART car was demolished. On Jan. 27 an "A" car on a siding in Oakland broke loose and rolled thru 3 stations before halting on an upgrade. The system shut down..... page 21

WINTERTIME IN THE SIERRAS! PASSENGER RAILROADING AT ITS FINEST! And what could be a better destination than the BIGGEST LITTLE CITY IN THE WORLD? Wrap it all up with the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association the weekend of February 22/23 or March 1/2 on our SIERRA SOJOURN Excursions with Private Car LA CONDESA. We'll be on the rear of the San Francisco Zephyr for a delightful daylight round trip over the snow capped Sierra Nevada. Our car's Victorian motif, wet bar, observation saloon and congenial fellow passengers make it a fine place to brave magnificent scenery, tunnels, snow sheds and the roar of passing freights on this Winter spectacular. A limit of twenty-five adventurers has been placed on each trip. We'll be at the NUGGET MOTOR LODGE overnight, just a block from the Sparks Depot. Our return home is Sunday morning, with fresh vistas from the westbound main line. Return to Oakland is in mid-afternoon. DON'T BE DISAPPOINTED. ORDER TICKETS NOW.

FARES: $70.00 per person includes round trip rail transportation in Private Car LA CONDESA, Spacious twin bedded accommodations (double occupancy) at the NUGGET MOTOR LODGE, all applicable taxes, and services of a competent tour escort.

RESERVATIONS: Call (415) 673-6547
Answered 24 hours a day.

or, SEND MONEY TO: BAY AREA ELECTRIC RR ASS'N.
3141 Franklin Street, Apt. 11
San Francisco, CA 94123

SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 1975: CHICO PICNIC SPECIAL

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"We have set out to improve passenger comfort and safety, maintain economy of operation and maintenance and above all to make urban transportation accessible to all Americans, especially the elderly and handicapped. TRANSBUS designs have accomplished these goals. The low floors, wider doors, improved lighting and other features are amenable to the needs of commuters across the nation. The special designs for boarding persons confined to wheelchairs on TRANSBUS is a big first step toward improved mobility."

--UMTA Administrator Frank C. Herringer, in introducing prototype models of advanced bus design for N.Y. service, January 9

"DOT believes that in view of the inflationary pressures in the economy, declining air traffic, and the need to achieve more efficient use of scarce fuel, a reduction in (air) fares for all coach passengers must be considered."

--DOT call for reduced air coach fares, January 9

Express Ads

AMTRAK TRAVEL THE WAY YOU WANT IT! Over 96% of all reservations received by our rail experts are completed exactly as requested. For your next travel adventure, call the helpful Amtrak Professionals at (415) 398-2994, or write GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton-Palace Hotel, 639 Market Street, San Francisco 94105.

SUPPORT THE SOUTHWEST LIMITED with your ridership. First class diner and dome lounge cars remain on. Help keep it this way. Try it on that business trip to Chicago or how about a weekend fun turnaround to Albuquerque. Fast mailout ticket service. Think of Let's Travel Tours for all your Amtrak ticket needs. Call COLLECT for reservations (714) 657-4785. P.O. Box 146, Perris CA 92370.

RIDE THE COAST STARLIGHT with the new coach round trip Spring excursion rates in effect through June 11th. Minimum stay 7 days - maximum 21 days. Between Los Angeles and San Francisco $38.00, Portland $89.00, Seattle $98.00. Ask for rates from San Diego or San Francisco. For reservations, call now COLLECT (714) 657-4785. Let's Travel Tours, P.O. Box 146, Perris CA 92370.

RAILROAD UNIFORM BUTTONS 60¢ each. Erie, Frisco, Southern, Milwaukee, Georgia, Katy, Monon and Seaboard. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

RAILROAD UNIFORM BUTTONS 60¢ each. Bangor and Aroostook, Boston Revere Beach & Lynn, Central Vermont and New Haven. J.Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

RAILROAD UNIFORM BUTTONS 60¢ each. Western Pacific, Union Pacific, Southern Pacific and Northern Pacific. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

ROCK ISLAND PLAYING CARDS. New limited edition. High quality, attractive design. Available with black or red backs. $1.50 plus 25¢ per deck post. & hdlg. Make check or M.O. payable to "Rock Island Lines" and send to: Rock Island Lines, Public Relations Dept. RTN, 139 W. Van Buren St., Chicago IL 60605.

NARROW GAUGE RAILROADING in the Rocky Mountains. "Steamy" is a locomotive on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. 28 pages to color plus an exciting story will give children a feeling for railroading as it was on the ex-D&RGW line. $1.75. Dave Ulmer, Jr., 1407 Holmes Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80909.

COLOR SLIDES - Two new 25-slide sets feature Northwest steam power of the past decade (both logging and excursion) and passenger, mixed and freight operations of four Canadian railways: Quebec North Shore & Labrador, Cartier, Canada & Gulf Terminal and Greater Winnipeg Water District. Sets are $6 each postpaid. Or send 25¢ for a sample slide and list of all 19 sets available from Northwest Rail Images, 4891 Donald Street, Eugene, OR 97405.

1975 Chesapeake & Ohio Calendar - 12 Steam and Diesel photos of C&O operations adorn this new calendar. First year of issue; only $2.00 postpaid.
C. J. Bocklage, Jr., 6816 Fait Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21224.

STILL AVAILABLE - 30 page illustrated history/roster of C&O lightweight passenger car fleet including dispositions of cars to IC, B&O, D&RGW, SCL, AMTRAK, etc. Complete data on all cars bought for the Pere Marquettes, The Chessie, and C&O's regular trains. Diagrams included. Only $3.00 postpaid. R. E. Jackson, 3 Admiral Blvd., Dundalk, MD 21222.

QUEBEC WINTER CARNIVAL by private car. Our four cars will transport you and be your hotel. Meals and drinks included. Leaves from New York via D&H route. Write to: George A. Pins, Suite 2612, 350 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001.

TIMETABLES - Buying all public TTs. Amtrak and earlier. Send your list. Collections too. C. F. Loucks. 199 Wayland St., Hamden, CT 06518.

MORE EXPRESS ADS are to be found on page 2.

FROM: P. O. Box 9007
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

First Class

To:

comp

FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID 10¢
PERMIT 1083
BERKELEY, CAL.

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

35¢

VOL.5 NO. 2
SECOND ISSUE OF
JANUARY 1975
Issue #100

January 19, 1975: the northbound COAST STARLIGHT, with helper engine attached, climbs the spectacular horseshoe curve on the Questa Grade north of San Luis Obispo, California